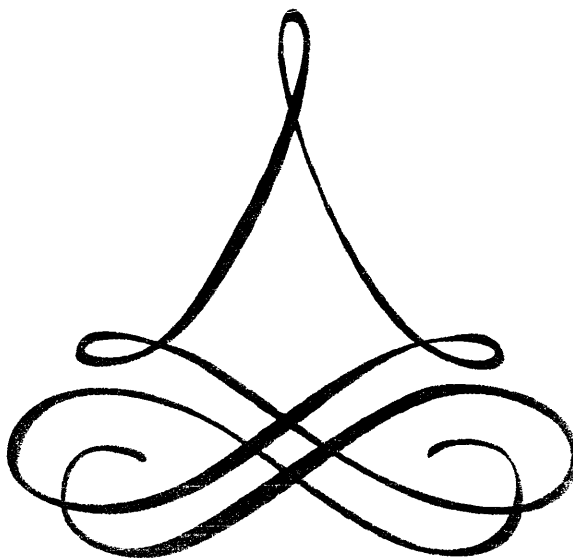


MACON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

FACT vs. FICTION



July 21, 2005

**Willie C. Thomas, Jr.
Superintendent of Education**

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The "Keep South Macon Alive Community Action Group" claims the following:	Macon County Public Schools sets the record straight. The truth is as follows:
<p>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has deliberately and systematically denied the children and parents of South Macon School the right to due process under the laws in its effort to restructure the school and consolidate it with three others.</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has deliberately and systematically denied the children and parents of South Macon School access to information regarding the educational facilities for the children in the South Macon area.</p>	<p>Macon County Board of Education sets the record straight:</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has granted due process to the students and parents of South Macon and to other interested parties by several means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several committee meetings were held beginning in February 2003 to make recommendations regarding Washington Public and South Macon schools. • Representatives from South Macon School included Theodore Samuel, Wendy Reed, and Stephanie Chambliss. • Special meetings have been held since February 2003 to year to discuss the consolidation plans in order for the community have a voice. • Concerned citizens' voices have been heard during Board meetings. <p>In addition, handouts have been provided and distributed that explain the goals and rationale for restructuring.</p>
<p>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has deliberately and systematically denied the children and parents of South Macon School adequate facilities, equipment, and materials necessary to ensure the quality of education that each child deserves.</p>	<p>Macon County Board of Education sets the record straight:</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has provided adequate facilities and equipment and materials necessary to ensure the quality of education to the students and parents of each of its schools, including South Macon.</p> <p>In an effort to provide adequate facilities, the MCBOE has provided new roofing, services to remove bats, pest control, sewage treatment, air conditioning, and other general maintenance.</p> <p>The MCBOE has equipped classrooms with new books and supplemental materials, new computers and computer software, etc. and trainings and in-service has been provided for the faculty and staff at each school, as well.</p>
<p>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has deliberately and systematically denied the children and parents of South Macon School access to adequate financial resources allocated for each child by various governmental entities.</p>	<p>Macon County Board of Education sets the record straight:</p> <p>South Macon School has received more than adequate financial resources allocated for each child by various governmental entities. According the Alabama State Department of Education, the per pupil expenditure at South Macon is greater than that of any other school. In 2004-2005, nearly \$8,200.00 per pupil was spent at South Macon while only \$6,000.00 per pupil was spent at other schools.</p> <p>For example, in 2004-2005, South Macon School earned 11.41 personnel units, but the MCBOE paid for 18 units, which is an additional 6.59 units. In 2003-2004 South Macon School earned 13.23 units, and the MCBOE paid for 20 units, which was an additional 6.77 units.</p>

<p><i>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</i></p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has proposed a consolidation plan that requires South Macon's Elementary School students, ranging in ages from 5 to 12 years, be bussed from their neighborhoods in the South Macon area to three different schools in Tuskegee, Alabama from distances as far away as 27.9 miles from their neighborhoods, requiring as much as an hour of drive time each way.</p>	<p><i>Macon County Board of Education sets the record straight:</i></p> <p>Many students who attend South Macon School currently travel an average of nearly 15 miles to school from the Bullock and Russell County lines; thus, removing the concept of a "neighborhood school."</p> <p>Secondly, the greatest number of additional miles that students will travel versus what they were already traveling to South Macon is 11 miles, which is approximately 10 to 11 minutes of additional travel time.</p> <p>All bus pick-up times for students will remain the same; therefore, students who were previously scheduled for 6:30 pick up will continue to be picked-up at 6:30.</p> <p>Also, bus drop-off times for students in grades K-5 will remain the same as previous years.</p>
<p><i>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</i></p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education has placed portable classrooms at one of the schools to house the 5 year old kindergarten students from the South Macon area, exposing them to an unsafe learning environment and in an unlawful setting inasmuch as portable classrooms have been outlawed in the State of Alabama.</p>	<p><i>Macon County Board of Education sets the record straight:</i></p> <p>All kindergarten students who attend Lewis Adams Early Childhood Center receive instruction in the main building.</p> <p>Head Start students are housed in the portable buildings.</p> <p>Portable building is permissible by law under certain conditions</p>
<p><i>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</i></p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education is deliberately and systematically attempting to create a city school system under the guise of a county school system and, in effect, ushering in a system of taxation without representation.</p>	<p><i>Macon County Board of Education set the record straight:</i></p> <p>There is no intent nor is there statutory authorization for the Macon County School Board to establish or operate a city school system in the county.</p>
<p><i>"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:</i></p> <p>The Macon County Board of Education's proposed school consolidation plan will be to close and abandon the county's only school that holds the record of the best test scores in the county and of being academically clear each year since the Alabama State Board of Education has been monitoring the schools in the Macon County School District.</p>	<p><i>Macon County Board of Education set the record straight:</i></p> <p>South Macon School self-proclaims to hold the record of the best test scores in the county and of being academically clear each year since the Alabama State Department of Education has been monitoring the schools in the Macon County School District. This statement is not fair to the other schools nor is it true.</p> <p>South Macon School has experienced academic success over the years; however, contrary to information reported by the Keep South Macon Alive Community Action Group, South Macon School is not the only school that has experienced success. Other schools in the district have test scores that prove they are academically sound as well.</p> <p>The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9/SAT-10) is not the only indicator of academic success as determined by the Alabama State Department of Education.</p>

"Keep South Macon Alive" asserts that:

The Macon County Board of Education's proposed school consolidation plan will be to close and abandon the county's only school that holds the record of the best test scores in the county and of being academically clear each year since the Alabama State Board of Education has been monitoring the schools in the Macon County School District.

Macon County Board of Education set the record straight:

The assessments required by the Alabama State Department of Education are as follows:

Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing. South Macon School did not meet adequate progress in 2003-2004 for fifth grade. In 2002-2003, all schools were academically clear for fifth grade as well as South Macon and Tuskegee Institute Middle School for seventh grade. In 2001-2002, South Macon School was not the only school academically clear for seventh grade.

Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT). The ARMT was given for the first time in 2003-2004 in grades 4, 6, and 8, South Macon School was not the only school to meet academic status. For example, South Macon School, Tuskegee Public School, and Washington Public School made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in fourth grade reading, while Deborah Cannon Wolfe School, South Macon School, Tuskegee Public School, and Washington Public School made AYP in mathematics as well. Students in sixth grade performed well in reading, as Deborah Cannon Wolfe School, Notasulga High School, South Macon School, and Tuskegee Public School performed well.

Results from the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) yield similar results. No school in the district has been academically every year. In fact, South Macon School received a caution status in 1995-1996.

2004-2005 Dynamic Indicators of Beginning Early Literacy (DIBELS) winter benchmark results were used to determine those schools needing additional assistance in reading. As a result, the Alabama State Department of Education determined that Lewis Adams, South Macon School, Tuskegee Public School, and Washington Public School schools needed additional help to get students reading at grade level and were selected to participate in the Alabama Reading Initiative PLUS Summer Program.

South Macon School and the others were chosen because of the following results:

Grade K results revealed that 34% of the students were reading below grade level.

Grade 1 results revealed that 37% of the students were reading below grade level.

Grade 2 results revealed that 52% of the students were reading below grade level.

Grade 3 results revealed that 40% of the students were reading below grade level.